

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UK, BE

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S DISCUSSIONS WITH GUATEMALAN
----- OFFICIALS - BELIZE DISPUTE

REFERENCE: LONDON 03307

1. QUESTION OF BELIZE DID ARISE IN DISCUSSIONS SECRETARY HELD WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA. EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON FOLLOWING TO INFORM FCO.
2. SECRETARY AND MOLINA TOUCHED ON BELIZE DISPUTE BRIEFLY DURING BILATERAL MEETING IN SAN JOSE AND AGAIN ABOARD SECRETARY'S AIRCRAFT DURING SAN JOSE-GUATEMALA FLIGHT. MOLINA STRESSED GUATEMALA'S CONVICTION THAT IT WAS ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION FOR UK FAILURE TO FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 1859 TREATY. HOWEVER, HE OFFERED
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NO NEW SUGGESTIONS FOR RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE. MOLINA

ALSO SAID IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT OPINION WITHIN BELIZE ON QUESTION OF EARLY INDEPENDENCE IS DIVIDED, THAT WHILE GOB FAVORS IT, THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION DOES NOT.

3. SECRETARY TOLD MOLINA THAT WHILE U.S. WILL NOT MEDIATE THE DISPUTE, WE HOPED THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD TRY TO FIND MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION.

4. BELIZE WAS ALSO DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN SECRETARY AND PRESIDENT LAUGERUD IN GUATEMALA CITY ON FEBRUARY 24. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD RESTATED HIS POSITION ON ISSUE AND ASSERTED THAT GUATEMALA WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REACT MILITARILY IF UK WERE TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO BELIZE UNILATERALLY. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT GUATEMALA HOPED TO RESUME TALKS WITH UK IN NEAR FUTURE BUT WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT UK MIGHT, AT ANY TIME, INITIATE PROCESS OF GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO BELIZE PRIOR TO REACHING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITH GUATEMALA.

5. SECRETARY TOLD LAUGERUD HE WAS CERTAIN THAT UK HAD ENTERED INTO NEGOTIATING PROCESS IN GOOD FAITH AND THAT UK WAS NOT LIKELY TO TAKE ANY ACTION UNTIL THE TALKS HAD RUN THEIR COURSE.

SECRETARY ALSO STATED THAT US WOULD NOT MEDIATE THE DISPUTE BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE BOTH SIDES TO FIND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION.

6. FYI: SECRETARY ALSO TOLD LAUGERUD THAT HE WOULD 'SPEAK; TO BRITISH TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO WORK FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. IT HAS NOT BEEN DECIDED YET HOW THIS MESSAGE WILL BE PASSED. END FYI. KISSINGER

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